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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 STATE 079541

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(CLINTON, HILLARY), IZ
SUBJECT: Secretary Clinton's July 24, 2009 Conversation
with Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki

Classified by NEA Acting Assistant Secretary Jeffrey D.
Feltman for Reason: 1.4 (d)

11. (U) July 24, 2009; 2:30 PM; Washington, DC.

12. (SBU) Participants:

U.S.
The Secretary
Deputy Secretary Jim Steinberg
Ambassador Chris Hill
Public Affairs Assistant Secretary P.J. Crowley
NEA Acting Assistant Secretary Jeffrey D. Feltman
Executive Assistant Joseph MacManus
NEA Senior Advisor Elissa Slotkin
NSC Senior Director Molly Phee
Rob Pyott (NEA Notetaker)

Iraq
Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki
Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari
Ambassador Samir Sumaidaie
Advisor Sadiq Rikabi
Advisor Yasin Majeed

13. (C) SUMMARY. In his meeting July 24 with the Secretary, Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said that the maritime border with Kuwait was "life or death" and made the case for a comprehensive solution to all outstanding issues with Kuwait. The Secretary asked the PM to formulate a comprehensive proposal as a first step. After some pressure, the PM agreed to appoint a coordinator for internally displaced and refugee issues. END SUMMARY.

Bilateral Relationship

14. (C) PM Maliki described for the Secretary the "many positive outcomes" of his current visit to Washington: the successful trade and investment event at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that morning (July 24); a useful meeting with the Secretary of Defense on training and related needs; the planned signing of an agreement on scholarships to American universities; and the meeting of the Higher Coordinating Committee to follow the bilateral meeting (to be reported septel). In the HCC, the PM wished to discuss ways to activate the Strategic Framework Agreement (SFA) and broaden relations between the countries. We have had progress, he said, "but it's not enough." He hoped the two events at the State Department would launch "a long, strong relationship." The Secretary expressed her support for this vision and noted that the SFA would go into depth on education, scientific, technical, and economic issues the two countries have agreed to work together on.

¶5. (C) The Secretary raised Iraq's status under certain resolutions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The Oil for Food program is ready to be resolved now and would lead to a rapid payment to Iraq of \$590 million. To pave the way for lifting resolutions related to weapons of mass destruction, she said that Ambassador Hill is ready to work with Iraqi experts on the language of a letter outlining Iraq's commitments to international norms on nonproliferation that would reassure members of the UN Security Council.

¶6. (C) Deputy Secretary Steinberg elaborated on an approach to resolving border issues with Kuwait. "The land issue is relatively straightforward; the maritime border is more crucial to you," he said. UN Representative Staffan De Mistura has worked on a package to address the land border by reaffirming UNSC Resolution 833; reduce the amount of reparations Iraq pays to the UN Compensation Commission; and develop a process to address the maritime issue. The Deputy Secretary asked for the PM's reaction to this approach so that the U.S. could urge the Kuwaiti Amir, in his forthcoming visit, to also accept the plan.

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¶7. (C) The PM's advisor, Sadiq Rikabi, laid out the Iraqi view: We don't want to divide the issues, he said. "Our intention is to solve all of it and close the file." He said this approach would require direct discussions with the Kuwaitis, with the U.S. and perhaps UN present. It would deal with all outstanding issues, including reparations, debt, archives, and human remains. FM Hoshiyar Zebari added that Iraq had an established communication line with Kuwait: "We're not starting from scratch." Zebari too said an American presence in talks would be helpful. The PM confirmed Ambassador Hill's description of Iraq's frustration with the need to navigate Kuwaiti waters three times to move from the Iraqi border to the Gulf.

¶8. (C) PM Maliki described the Iraqi frustration with Chapter VII resolutions more broadly. He wanted the Chapter VII issues dealt with comprehensively. "We need to get out of these in order to thrive," he said. He pointed out that Iraq no longer has weapons of mass destruction and does not seek them, and Iraq is no longer a dictatorial regime - conditions that had led the Security Council to determine Iraq was a threat to peace and security in the region. "Iraq will be a responsible partner in the international community," he said.

¶9. (C) As a practical matter, Maliki said Iraqi "ministries are suffering" under UN resolutions. He cited the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Education as those facing restrictions in daily operations, such as obtaining chemicals for fertilizers.

¶10. (C) Maliki argued for a "head-on" approach toward solving matters with Kuwait. "Kuwait has suffered; we have suffered also," he said, and suggested that the current reparations regime was "punitive" and thus not a suitable basis for resolution. He claimed Iraq can quickly resolve the land border, the archives issue, repatriation of remains, and other issues. The only issue which requires outside help is the maritime border, which he characterized as "life or death" for Iraq; Iraq must have access to the sea. He also asserted that Iraq had already responded to many outstanding obligations, and complained that this action had not been sufficiently acknowledged. The PM offered his view that it is the Kuwaitis who have been unwilling to decrease the reparations payments and unresponsive to

an Iraqi request to be flexible on the maritime question.

¶11. (C) AA/S Feltman discussed his recent trip to Kuwait and reported that the Kuwaitis are familiar with the De Mistura package and not overly concerned about action on reparations or the maritime border. But Kuwaitis would like to see Iraq make tangible progress on the land border, including removing farmers and restoring border pillars. The PM replied that such intermediary steps are politically sensitive in Iraq. "Without a comprehensive solution, there will be chaos" if the Iraqi government removes farmers. The logic of small steps on the land border made him uncomfortable. "If we go through piece by piece, we will have border clashes and real problems," he said.

¶12. (C) The Secretary proposed a next step. She asked the PM to work with Ambassador Hill on a comprehensive proposal that meets the Iraqis' needs. "Then we will encourage the Kuwaitis," she said. The PM agreed to do so.

Disputed Internal Boundaries

¶13. (C) The PM acknowledged that Iraq is committed to the UN Task Force on disputed internal boundaries. "We're going along with Staffan De Mistura's proposal. The process is moving," he said.

Internally Displaced and Refugees

¶14. (C) The PM proved reluctant to name a government coordinator for policies concerning internally displaced and refugees. He said the GOI has cabinet officials dealing with the issue; the Minister of Displacement and Migration, Abdelsamad Rahman Sultan, is the key figure. He also named the Minister of State for National Dialogue as another official with a significant role. The PM stated that the numbers of refugees cited by

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Syria and Jordan are greatly exaggerated. The Secretary and the Deputy Secretary pressed him to name a coordinator who would have responsibility across ministries and who could be a point of contact for the U.S., the UN and others. The Deputy Secretary said the White House had agreed to name a counterpart on the issue. With that, the PM said "I will appoint someone when I get back."

¶15. (U) After their bilateral meeting, the Secretary and Prime Minister jointly chaired a meeting of the Higher Coordinating Committee to discuss implementation of the Strategic Framework Agreement (septel).
CLINTON